

Schools Trust Gets Off the Ground; Elects Board of Nine Directors

by Cynthia Davison

The new Harvard Schools Trust, an independent, nonprofit, tax-exempt, charitable corporation, got off the ground on Monday night with the election of a nine-member board of directors. Those elected are Carole Christensen; Francis Coolidge; Carol Fuller; Jeff Harris; Jody Pike; Mimmu Sloan; Eugene Solod; Bill Thurston, who is acting treasurer for the trust; and Richard Wolfson. Christensen, Fuller, Thurston, and School Committee members George Herbolsheimer and Worth Robbins have been working behind the scenes for several months to create the trust and obtain tax-exempt and charitable organization status. According to the draft bylaws, there can be a total of fifteen directors, so an additional six may still be elected. Herbolsheimer said that the trust will be independent and publicly supported; therefore, Finance and School

Committee members and selectmen will not be allowed to serve on the board.

Reading from a brochure prepared for the "formation meeting," Robbins explained that the purpose of the trust is to support Harvard schools, "provide supplemental educational programs and opportunities for teachers, students, and administrators, and to broaden community support, involvement, and confidence in the school system and its students."

When Myrick Lane resident Ken Brater asked Robbins what would happen if the trust and the School Committee or superintendent were to disagree on how money raised by the trust should be used, Robbins replied only that the directors would have to deal with that; he pointed out that "the purpose of the trust is to be harmonious with the goals and objectives of the school system, to be complementary

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and supplementary, not competitive." Though he thinks it is unlikely that such a situation will occur, Robbins said the trust could decline a contribution the donor wanted earmarked for an activity about which the trust and school officials disagreed.

After discussion of the whys and wherefores of a recommended annual minimum membership contribution of \$25 for families or individuals, the 40 or so townspeople present voted to accept it. But Robbins said that the newly formed board of directors, described as the "management group that will carry on the business of the corporation," will likely review that figure as well as suggestions that different kinds of memberships and sponsorships be offered and that bequests be encouraged.

Other business on the agenda for the board of directors is to elect officers, establish procedures, nominate additional directors, set a fund-raising goal and plans for achieving it, and schedule a membership meeting, probably early next year. Thurston appealed to the directors to cover the trust's overhead expenses so that 100

percent of the money raised can be used in support of the schools.

Dr. Elizabeth Twomey, associate commissioner for school programs for the Massachusetts Department of Education and featured speaker at the meeting, encouraged the formation of the trust. She decried the need for private support of public education, but she called the trust "a wonderful supplement" and predicted that it will help reduce polarization in Harvard during the statewide economic downturn that she expects will last another three or four years. Citing what she called the "common good" theory, which includes the right to an education, Twomey reminded those present that whether they have children in school or not, education is necessary not only to produce good citizens but also to have a skilled workforce in the future. Director Richard Wolfson picked up on this theme later in the evening, saying that the number of trust members and their ability to articulate the needs and values of education in the community may be more important than the amount of money raised.